



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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NEWS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CLAUDE S. BRINEGAR TODAY MADE THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF EMERGENCY ACTION WITH RESPECT TO THE SERIOUS FLOODING IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY, APRIL 5, 1973

I have today requested and received authorization from President Nixon for the immediate call to duty of a force of Coast Guard Ready Reservists to assist in emergency operations in flooded areas along the Mississippi and its tributaries.

This action has been taken under a law approved last October which permits the call to duty of Coast Guard Reservists to assist in operations made necessary by natural disasters or emergencies such as that created by the present floods. A request for the action was transmitted to me by Admiral Chester R. Bender, Commandant of the Coast Guard, after it became apparent that regular Coast Guard personnel, working in the flood area, were being overtaxed. The President's authorization for activation of the reserve forces has been granted and three units will be called to duty immediately. This is the first time in the history of the Coast Guard that such peacetime action has been taken.

The three units affected by the call consist of about 143 men. One unit is stationed at Peoria and two are from St. Louis. All will report to the Coast Guard base at St. Louis for assignment.

If the need arises, more reserve units may be called to duty. Regular Coast Guard personnel have been working since last week with only short periods of relief. Today's action will provide relief for those regular units and increase the capability of the Coast Guard in the flooded area. The need for additional action will depend on the progress of the floods which now have covered millions of acres and made thousands of families homeless.

Today's action is in keeping with the traditional role of the Coast Guard, the primary function of which is the saving of lives and the protection of property.

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